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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
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10/622,435

07/18/2003

Thai Huynh-Ba

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09/25/2007

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EXAMINER

LEVKOVICH, NATALIA A

ART UNIT

PAPER NUMBER

1743

MAIL DATE

DELIVERY MODE

09/25/2007

PAPER

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

The time period for reply, if any, is set in the attached communication.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

10/622,435

Applicant(s)

HUYNH-BA ET AL.

Examiner

Natalia Levkovich

Art Unit

1743

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 24 May 2007.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-6 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-6 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☒ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☒ objected to by the Examiner.
- Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
- Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) ☐ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____
- 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____
- 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application
- 6) ☐ Other: _____

DETAILED ACTION

Response to Appeal

1. In view of the appeal filed on 05/24/2007, PROSECUTION IS HEREBY REOPENED. A new rejection is set forth below.

To avoid abandonment of the application, appellant must exercise one of the following two options:

(1) file a reply under 37 CFR 1.111 (if this Office action is non-final) or a reply under 37 CFR 1.113 (if this Office action is final); or,

(2) initiate a new appeal by filing a notice of appeal under 37 CFR 41.31 followed by an appeal brief under 37 CFR 41.37. The previously paid notice of appeal fee and appeal brief fee can be applied to the new appeal. If, however, the appeal fees set forth in 37 CFR 41.20 have been increased since they were previously paid, then appellant must pay the difference between the increased fees and the amount previously paid.

A Supervisory Patent Examiner (SPE) has approved of reopening prosecution by signing below:

Drawings:

2. The drawings are objected to under 37 CFR 1.83(a). The drawings must show every feature of the invention specified in the claims. Therefore, the locking tabs formed on the 'lower portion' of the band, as recited in claim 5, as well as the element

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referred to as a 'bottom', must be shown or the feature(s) canceled from the claim(s).

No new matter should be entered.

Corrected drawing sheets in compliance with 37 CFR 1.121(d) are required in reply to the Office action to avoid abandonment of the application. Any amended replacement drawing sheet should include all of the figures appearing on the immediate prior version of the sheet, even if only one figure is being amended. The figure or figure number of an amended drawing should not be labeled as "amended." If a drawing figure is to be canceled, the appropriate figure must be removed from the replacement sheet, and where necessary, the remaining figures must be renumbered and appropriate changes made to the brief description of the several views of the drawings for consistency. Additional replacement sheets may be necessary to show the renumbering of the remaining figures. Each drawing sheet submitted after the filing date of an application must be labeled in the top margin as either "Replacement Sheet" or "New Sheet" pursuant to 37 CFR 1.121(d). If the changes are not accepted by the examiner, the applicant will be notified and informed of any required corrective action in the next Office action. The objection to the drawings will not be held in abeyance.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112

3. The following is a quotation of the second paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall conclude with one or more claims particularly pointing out and distinctly claiming the subject matter which the applicant regards as his invention.

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4. Claims 2-4 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being unclear for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention.

Claim 2 recites the 'front and back curved surfaces' which 'do not extend to the bottom of the magazine so that a number of cuvette ejection openings are formed at the front surface of the magazine between the chute walls'. It is unclear whether or not some elements preventing formation of similar openings at the back surface are implied.

In claim 3, the 'interior chute wall' lacks antecedent basis. See also 'exterior chute wall' of claim 4. Additionally, the claims do not set forth structural inter-relationships between the walls in question and the 'opposing chute walls' of claim 1. Claims 3 and 4 also recite, respectively, a 'flat pad' and a 'flat ledge' being 'smaller than the storage chutes'. These limitations are unclear because a chute is a three-dimensional object, and flat pad, or ledge –two-dimensional. What measurements would be needed to evaluate whether or not the limitation is met?

Note that the term 'a number of' is interpreted by the Examiner as 'one'. If more than one element is intended, Applicant is advised to recite a 'plurality of' elements.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

5. The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

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(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

6. Claims 1 and 5 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as anticipated by Billet et al. (US 5921435).

Billet discloses a dispenser ['magazine'] for containers comprising, as shown in Figures 1-2, 8 and 12-13, curved front and back surfaces and chutes 422, 424, 426 and 428 formed by dividers 50, 55, 60, 65 ['chute walls'].. Each divider carries plastic guards 429 forming 'two opposing pairs of ribs protruding into the interior' of each chute' (see Figure 13). With respect to claim 5, Figures 1 and 2 show exterior storage portion 12 ['band'] which includes clasps 26 ['locking tabs'] disposed in corresponding grooves [not indexed], the parallel horizontal edges of each groove forming a pair of 'rails'.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

7. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

8. The factual inquiries set forth in *Graham v. John Deere Co.*, 383 U.S. 1, 148 USPQ 459 (1966), that are applied for establishing a background for determining obviousness under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) are summarized as follows:

1. Determining the scope and contents of the prior art.
2. Ascertaining the differences between the prior art and the claims at issue.
3. Resolving the level of ordinary skill in the pertinent art.
4. Considering objective evidence present in the application indicating obviousness or nonobviousness.

9. Claims 1-5 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being obvious over Terashima et al. (US 5536472) in view of MacIndoe (US 5332549).

Terashima et al. disclose a test element cartridge ['magazine'] comprising, as shown in Figures 3-4, a generally rectangular body 21 ['chute'] which includes a take-out port 22 ['ejection opening'] with 'ledges' / 'pads' / 'locking tabs' 22a, 22b. The side walls include two pairs of internal ribs 21 d ['rails'] and external ribs 21 a.

Terashima does not teach the curved shape of the front and back walls. However, magazines of such shape are well known in the art. See, for example, "arcuately shaped assay module supply units or segments" 107 in Figure 7 of MacIndoe each incorporating a number of magazines 109. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to have modified the shape of magazine in the system of Terashima in this manner, in order to more conveniently interface test element supply units with related equipment of circular shape, such as, for example, turn tables. It would have been also within the ordinary skill of an artisan at the time the invention was made to have arranged multiple chutes in a single unit, in order to increase productivity and enhance the level of automation in the system.

Double Patenting

10. The nonstatutory double patenting rejection is based on a judicially created doctrine grounded in public policy (a policy reflected in the statute) so as to prevent the

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unjustified or improper timewise extension of the "right to exclude" granted by a patent and to prevent possible harassment by multiple assignees. See *In re Goodman*, 11 F.3d 1046, 29 USPQ2d 2010 (Fed. Cir. 1993); *In re Longi*, 759 F.2d 887, 225 USPQ 645 (Fed. Cir. 1985); *In re Van Ornum*, 686 F.2d 937, 214 USPQ 761 (CCPA 1982); *In re Vogel*, 422 F.2d 438, 164 USPQ 619 (CCPA 1970); and, *In re Thorington*, 418 F.2d 528, 163 USPQ 644 (CCPA 1969).

A timely filed terminal disclaimer in compliance with 37 CFR 1.321(c) may be used to overcome an actual or provisional rejection based on a nonstatutory double patenting ground provided the conflicting application or patent is shown to be commonly owned with this application. See 37 CFR 1.130(b).

Effective January 1, 1994, a registered attorney or agent of record may sign a terminal disclaimer. A terminal disclaimer signed by the assignee must fully comply with 37 CFR 3.73(b).

11. Claim 1 is rejected under the judicially created doctrine of obviousness-type double patenting as being unpatentable over claim 1 and 2 of U.S.6632654.

Although the conflicting claims are not identical, they are not patentably distinct from each other because the instant claim 1 is encompassed by claims 1-2 of U.S.6632654.

Allowable Subject Matter

12. Claim 6 would be allowable if rewritten to overcome the rejection(s) under 35 U.S.C. 112, 2nd paragraph, set forth in this Office action and to include all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

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The prior art does not teach, or fairly suggest a rectangular magazine with curved front and back walls forming, together with opposing side walls at least one storage chute, each side wall having two opposing pairs of ribs protruding into the chute, the magazine further comprising a hinged gate proximate the bottom of the magazine, the gate being spring-loaded by a hinge-spring on the curved front surface, the gate adapted to swing outwards from a closed position, as recited in claim 6.

Response to Arguments

13. Applicant's arguments filed on 05/24/2007 have been fully considered but they are moot in view of the new grounds of rejection.


Conclusion

14. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Natalia Levkovich whose telephone number is 571-272-2462. The examiner can normally be reached on Mon-Fri, 8 a.m.-4p.m..

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Jill Warden can be reached on 571-272-1267. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

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Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).


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